



Photos by Rick Berg

“We think it’s good for us, obviously, in terms of helping to create more interest in engineering and technology,” says Ariens, “and we also like being part of something as innovative and unique as the curriculum they’ve created at the high school.”

The 10,000-square-foot Technology and Engineering Education Center includes a 50-student lecture facility; a processing and fabrication facility for wood, metal, plastics and composites; and a state-of-the-art design laboratory with computers, CNC machines, electronics and robotics equipment. Brillion High School’s technology education program, led by Steve Meyer, has been a model for engineering education for several years, but the Ariens contribution will allow students to work on larger, more complex activities and to work on integrated projects with other disciplines such as mathematics and science. Approximately 200 of the high school’s 350 students participate in one or more engineering and technology classes, according to Brillion High School Principal Paul Nistler.

“In our engineering program in the past, students have been able to learn how to use CAD programs, but now they’ll be able to actually build something they design on those programs,” says Nistler. “We really hope to be a model for how to prepare kids for work in engineering and manufacturing, and also to prepare them better for post-secondary education in engineering.

It’s an important step in terms of collaboration between educators and employers. In education, we often hear from business and industry that we don’t do enough to get kids ready for the workplace. This is the result of listening to what business and industry are looking for, and working together to meet those needs.”

“As we got more involved with Steve Meyer’s program at the high school, we could see that he was really developing something special,” says Ariens. “The kids are really attaching themselves to it, so much so that he now has a waiting list of students wanting to get into that program. I think it has a lot to do with Steve’s energy, but students also seem to like the way they’re all able to be involved in the creative process all the way through to production, where they can see the finished product. As far as we know, it’s unique in this state, and probably throughout the nation.” *continued >*

Above: The Ariens Technology and Engineering Education Center features a state-of-the-art design laboratory with computers, CNC machines, electronics and robotics equipment.

Left: Brillion High School technology teacher Steve Meyer helps guide students through the design and production process.